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Inside Information

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NOV 22 '82

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 20

United States Department
of Agriculture
Office of Governmental
and Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20250

AUGUST 30, 1982

INSIDE THIS "INSIDE"

PROSTANTIN E. BON
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

Page

New USDA assistant secretary for governmental and public affairs on board.....1
USDA publications review board issues guidelines for publication users fees...2
CASE sponsors publications workshop to help editors cope with budget cuts.....2
Farm Safety Week to be observed in September this year.....2
Soil Conservation Service's senior public affairs specialist cited by SCSA....3
Cornell University publishes guidebook on "Marketing Cooperative Extension"...3
National Association of Government Communicators plans annual conference.....3
National Hispanic Heritage Week proclaimed by President.....3
USDA News Center provides feedback on usage of "USDA ONLINE" news service....4
Communications strategies published for "agricultural change agents".....4
Last "Editor's Letter" issued by USDA Science & Education information head....4

NEW USDA ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR GPA

Wilmer D. (Vinegar Bend) Mizell, Sr., was sworn in Aug. 23 as USDA assistant secretary for governmental and public affairs by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block.

By the week's end, Mizell was taking part in the Secretary's second "agricultural roundtable" of discussions with 16 major farm commodity organizations at Block Farms in Knox County, Ill.

Mizell, a former three-term congressman from North Carolina and assistant secretary of commerce, has been a public relations representative for the Southern Tool Manufacturing Company, Inc., Winston-Salem, N.C., since 1977.

He also is a former major league baseball pitcher--first with St. Louis Cardinals in 1952, then to Pittsburgh Pirates in 1960 where his 13-5 pitching record that year helped the team win the World's Championship. He retired from the New York Mets in 1962.

From 1963 to 1968 he worked for the Pepsi-Cola Bottlers of Winston-Salem, in public relations and sales management.

Mizell was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from the fifth district of North Carolina in 1968, an office he held until 1974, when he was appointed assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

While in the U.S. Congress, Mizell served on the House Committee on Agriculture and the Subcommittees on Family Farms and Rural Development, Dairy and Poultry, Oil Seeds and Rice, and Tobacco. He also served on the House Committee on Public Works.

Mizell got his nickname, "Vinegar Bend," from his home town of Vinegar Bend, Ala. He grew up on a farm and maintained an interest in farming throughout his professional baseball, corporate and government careers.

In his new USDA position, Mizell will be responsible for USDA's public affairs, congressional affairs and intergovernmental relations.

He succeeds James C. Webster, appointed as USDA's first assistant secretary for governmental and public affairs. Claude W. Gifford has been acting assistant secretary since January 1981.

Mizell was nominated by President Reagan for the post in July and was confirmed by the U.S. Senate Aug. 18.

USDA GUIDELINES FOR PUBLICATION USER FEES

The USDA Secretary's Publications Review Board has completed its review of agencies' plans for implementing user fees for publications and periodicals.

The Board has provided guidelines for the agencies, the intent being "to leave as much flexibility as possible to the agencies in implementation of user fees while striving for consistency where possible in order to achieve fairness, credibility and efficiency across USDA." Following broad decisions were made:

1. No central collection system for user fees will be established in USDA.
2. Guidelines will be developed by Sept. 1 to help agencies in calculating, collecting and retention of user fees (where appropriate and if they choose to adopt this option).
3. All periodicals that have been approved by the U.S. Office of Management & Budget will be subject to user fees, with maximum free distribution set at 1,000 copies.

4. USDA agencies must obtain in advance documentation of the intent to cost-share by a cooperator for any print orders on which cost-share plans are based.

5. USDA's Office of Governmental & Public Affairs will develop a clear set of instructions and explanations by Sept. 1, on how agencies can make fullest use of sales through the U.S. Government Printing Office and the National Technical Information Service.

6. Any appeals of the Review Board's decisions must be made to the Deputy Secretary's office by the under or assistant secretaries of agriculture.

A memorandum spelling out the guidelines was distributed to all under and assistant secretaries, agency administrators and agency information directors.

DOING BETTER PUBLICATIONS FOR LESS

To help editors cope with the budget crunch while at the same time improve quality, the Council for Advancement & Support of Education (CASE) is sponsoring a two-day workshop in Atlanta, Ga., Oct. 14-15.

Four experts in the publications field will discuss in separate sessions a marketing approach to publications, total publications program, how to save time and money through good publications management, evaluating publications, using new technology to save money on type, building support for a publications program and how to cut publications cost.

The four discussion leaders will be John E. "Mike" Ellis, associate director of university relations and director of the Office of Publications and Creative Services, University of Alabama; Virginia Carter Smith, vice president of CASE and editor of "Case Currents;" Robert S. Topor, assistant director of media services at Cornell University; and M. Fredric Volkmann, director of public relations, Washington University, St. Louis.

For additional information, contact Lora Silsbee, CASE, Suite 400, 11 Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036, or call (202) 328-5931.

FARM SAFETY WEEK OBSERVED IN SEPTEMBER

President Reagan, in proclaiming the week of Sept. 19 as "National Farm Safety Week," has called for a strong commitment to safety by those who live and work on the nation's farms and ranches, and for ample support for that commitment by organizations allied with agriculture.

SCS PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER RECOGNIZED

Lee B. Shields, senior public affairs specialist with USDA's Soil Conservation Service in Washington, D.C., has been cited by the Soil Conservation Society of America for outstanding service to the national organization.

Robert C. Baum of Salem, Ore., SCSA president, presented a President's Citation to Shields for his "enthusiastic leadership as chairman of SCSA's Membership and Chapter Development Committee in initiating a five-year membership development plan, as well as for his conscientious efforts in assisting SCSA chapters to develop sound programs."

The President's Citation is given to individuals or groups who exert a special influence on SCSA activities through contributions of time or talent. No more than 10 of the citations are given annually.

SCSA is a private, nonprofit, scientific and educational organization dedicated to advancing the science and art of good land use. It has about 14,000 members in the United States, Canada and about 80 other countries.

The theme of this year's annual conference, in New Orleans, La., where the citation was presented to Shields, was "The Politics of Conservation."

"MARKETING COOPERATIVE EXTENSION" IN BOOK

A practical, illustrated 46-page guidebook for county Cooperative Extension leaders, agents, staff and volunteers, called "Marketing Cooperative Extension," has just been published by Cornell University.

Robert Topor, assistant director of Cornell's Media Services, is the author. Topor has delivered many talks illustrated with slides to describe how marketing principles can be applied to extension work.

"Many requests for a follow-up booklet encouraged me to write the guidebook," Topor said.

He would be happy to offer copies to other states for a price of \$3.25, which covers cost of printing and postage.

Send requests to Media Services, B-10 MVR, Cornell University, Ithica, NY 14853.

ANNUAL NAGC EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE SET

The annual educational conference sponsored by the National Association of Government Communicators will be held Nov. 18-20 at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C.

This year's theme will be "The Challenge of Communicating in Hard Times."

NAGC members' registration fee is \$125; nonmembers pay \$150.

More details about the conference will be forthcoming.

HISPANIC HERITAGE WEEK PROCLAIMED

The week of Sept. 12 has been proclaimed as "National Hispanic Heritage Week" by President Reagan in honor of Hispanic men and women.

The presidential proclamation calls upon federal, state and local officials to observe the proud history of Hispanic peoples, and asks all Americans to join together in peace, brotherhood and pride in being one nation under God.

FEEDBACK ON "USDA ONLINE" NEWS SERVICE

The USDA News Center is able to track who is accessing its electronic news service, "USDA ONLINE" (on the Dialcom system), and what items are being selected by the users.

During a recent two-week period, 60 percent of all accesses were for the "news" items, 13 percent for "crop report summaries" and 9 percent for "outlook and situation summaries."

The other three "USDA ONLINE" offerings--"foreign agricultural reports," "economic research report abstracts" and weekly "Farm Paper Letter"--were each accessed about 6 percent of the total.

Heaviest users of "USDA ONLINE" were the three regional information offices of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service and the national information office of USDA's Food & Nutrition Service.

Others who accessed the electronic news service fairly frequently were six land grant universities, the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, the commercial "Food Marketing Communicator" newsletter (New York) and the National Association of Wheat Growers.

"COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES" BOOK PUBLISHED

Interstate Printers & Publishers, Danville, Ill., recently published a new book, "Communications Strategies: A Guide for Agricultural Change Agents," by Herbert Lionberger and Paul Gwin.

Gwin is retired agricultural extension editor and Lionberger is professor of rural sociology at University of Missouri.

The 265-page book tells how to get research findings to the person who can use these findings. It is designed to help those who are the "buffer" between the researcher and the potential user.

People normally will not do what they do not understand. "Communications Strategies" explains how to take the researcher's language and convert it to the user's language, and then how to get it adopted.

The list price is \$8.95, less 10 percent professional discount on one copy and 20 percent discount on orders for two or more copies.

Send requests to The Interstate Printers & Publishers, Inc., 19-27 North Jackson Street, Danville, IL 61832.

LAST "EDITOR'S LETTER" ISSUED BY SKELSEY

The final phase of the reorganization of the former USDA Science & Education Administration is about completed.

On that note, Alice Skelsey, S&E Information Staff director, published her last "Editor's Letter" on Aug. 16.

Skelsey suggested to those receiving her newsletter that they may wish to get on the mailing list of three other information newsletters: Ovid Bay's "Extension Electronic Communications Newsletter," Extension Service; Mason Miller's "Research Information Newsletter," Cooperative State Research Service; or "Inside Information," Office of Governmental & Public Affairs.

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to Stan W. Prochaska, Assistant Public Affairs Director, Room 402-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, to AGR002 on the Dialcom electronic mail system, or call (202) 447-7454.